

ABSTRACT

A forms engine allows data sharing between customizable on-line forms, such as college admissions applications. After an applicant completes an application, the data is saved in a database and automatically populates fields in subsequent application forms. Each form is branded for its institution and forms for different institutions differ in appearance and content so that the presence of the third party servicer is transparent to the applicant. The system is extensible without programming, allowing new applicant attributes to be readily incorporated into the system and allowing the content and appearance of the application to be readily changed by changing the description file. Information stored about each attribute allows the specification of data validation rules and data sharing and grouping rules, as well as dependency rules that permit application page content to depend on applicant's responses on a previous page.